

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

Schacharit/Morning Nature Walk

Start Your Morning

AUTHOR(S):	Josh Lake
SUMMARY:	Let a nature walk help you rise and meet the day. Through listening, observing and playing, we wake to the possibility of the day. Jewish song, dance and ideas help us orient our mindset towards discovery, appreciation and beauty.
TOPIC(S):	Nature, Alternative prayer (tefillah)
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will learn and gain new skills to use at camp with their campers Participants will experience the night sky and learn to see things that are in plain sight, but not apparent. Participants will feel, see, and hear the night in new ways.
AUDIENCE:	15-25 people of any age.
TIMING:	60 minutes
APPENDICES:	The Apple Trees Discovery story Radical Amazement quote by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Oak Gall, apple, knife
SET-UP DETAILS:	Outdoors, rain or starlight

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

00:00-00:05	Introduction
00:05-00:15	Oak Gall and Torah
00:15-00:40	Nature Walk
00:40-00:45	Shema in Nature
00:45-00:55	Apple Trees Discovery
00:55-01:00	Wolf Howl!



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Introduction (5 minutes)

Greet everyone: *Heineh Ma Tov!* What a way to start your day, with song!

Pokiach Ivrim: We explore a tree and see what a tree can show us about opening our eyes. We say the Blessing for Opening the eyes of the blind (*Pokiach Ivrim*).

Have one participant read quote:

“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement...get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed. -Abraham Joshua Heschel

“Learning *about* the natural world is one thing. Learning *from* the natural world is something else entirely.” - Dr. Janine Benyus: Biomimicry's surprising lessons from nature's engineers (Ted Talk)

Oak Gall and Torah (10 minutes)

Here is a way that Jews have used bio mimicry. AMAZING! Check out this TED Talk presented by Dr. Janine Benyus: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_GFq12w5WU

This is what wasps have learned to do: They have learned to genetically manipulate a tree to grow a house/nursery around their babies! Jews have derived Torah from this amazing interaction! Torah is *Eitz Chaim He!*

Ask Participants: Now that you know about the oak gall, what can we learn from the oak gall? What does it mean in Jewish terms? Learning about Torah is one thing; learning *from* Torah is something completely different. Share logic from *Bal Tashchit*.

Nature Walk (25 minutes)

Along trail Identify plants and animal tracks: White pine, Oak (*Alonim*), Mullein, Etc. (Learn 3-4 plants on camp. Get an ID book. Don't learn too much – or risk burn out!)

Shema in Nature (5 minutes)

Share: We say the Shema using our breath and actually do what the Shema asks of us: listen.

Have participant recite the Shema as inspiration for authentic learning.

Reflect on how novel it is to actually listen after we recite the Shema!? When has anyone actually listened after reciting the Shema in synagogue?

Apple Trees Discovery (10 minutes)

Take an apple on the hike. Find a shady place to sit under a tree. Read *The Apple Trees Discovery* by Peninah Schram. At the end, cut the apple across its midriff to expose the star and show to participants.

Wolf Howl! (5 minutes)

The howl is our communal *Amidah*. It is better than any language because you can let your feelings come out and not be embarrassed because of the language. For feelings are meta linguistic!

Lech l'echa!

Go forth and do good this summer!